

# FUTURIST STORIES

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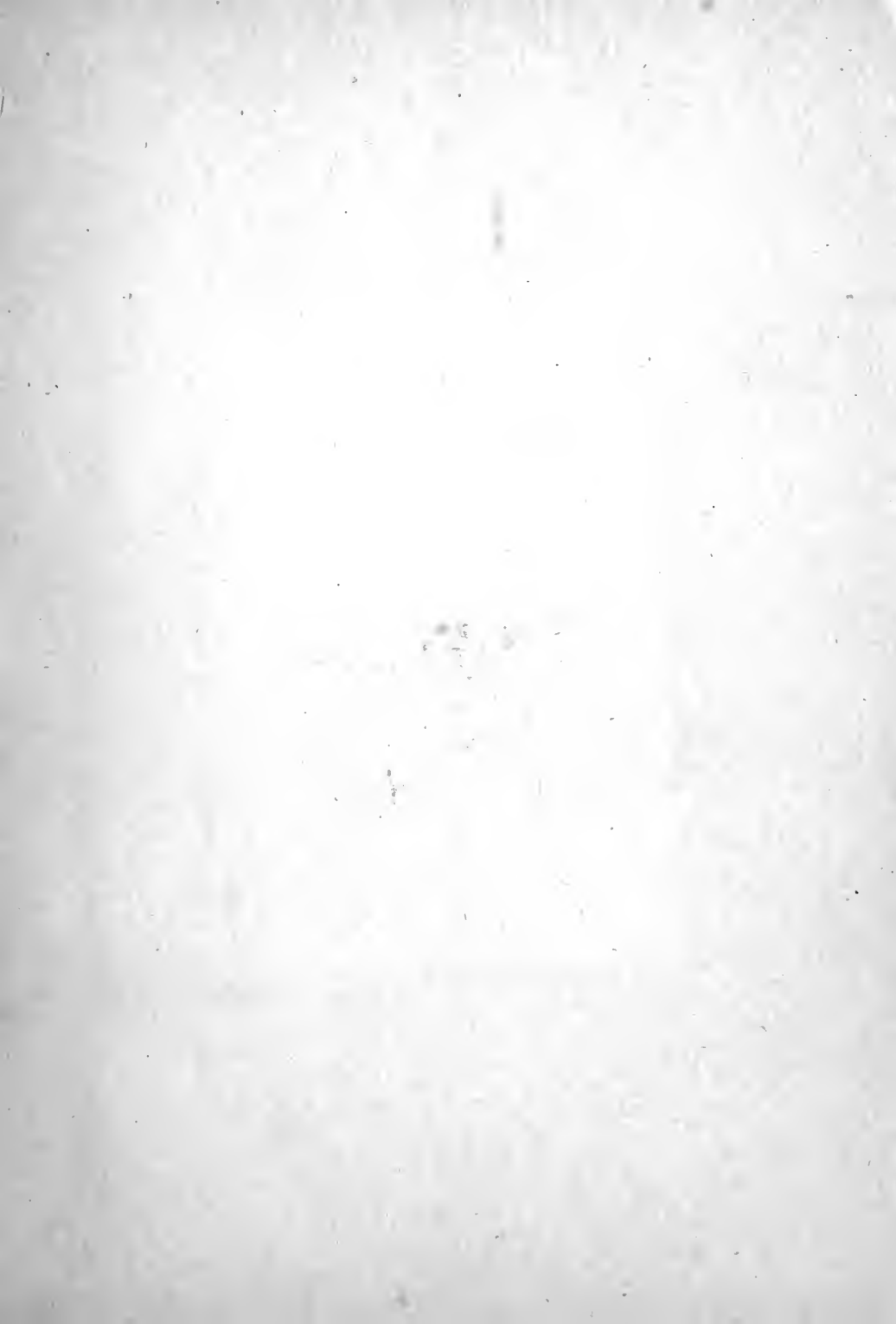
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MARGERY VERNER REED

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NEW YORK

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1919

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# FUTURIST STORIES

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THAT NIGHT HIS SORROW WAS LIFTED



## MOONBEAMS [*To V. Z. R.*]

It was a glorious winter's night. Through a blue haze one saw the ground, covered with snow, shining under the magical moon. And the trees of the forest were also covered with snow; great clusters glistened in their branches. Almost as light as day. Not a bleak light, but an enchanting one, which dazzled in the cold, brisk air. Into the woods walked the Spirit of Art. As he gazed at the surrounding beauty he grew sad, and wondered why he had never reproduced such splendor — the moon — the snow — Oh, he must try again — Tomorrow he would do better.

Then came the Spirit of History and he too grew sad as he gazed into the quietude of the night. His hands were soiled with blood, with dark hideous crimes. And he asked why he had committed such deeds — with all this beauty around him. Why could he not have likened history to these woods where the snow was white. Tomorrow he would do better.

And then came the Spirit of Philosophy and like the others he wondered why he had never been under the spell of the Moonbeams before — why had he filled the minds of men with entangled masses of dark thought, instead of teaching them the beauty, the enchantment of a night like this. Tomorrow he would do better.

The three Spirits met and talked together. They would go back to the cities and begin anew. They would bring the spell of the woods back with them and teach men unknown things.

A NEW Era was about to be born.

MORNING dawned cold and raw, a bleak gray light shone in the deserted streets. The three Spirits returning from their wandering all too soon forgot the magic spell of the woods — the snow — the Moon — and felt to work once more among the sordid things of the day, making Art and History and Philosophy only grayer — darker —

AND in the woods where all was beauty, the Moon beams shone only for the fairies as they danced under the trees, and now and then for a wistful human soul that had strayed into the splendor of the night.

## THE DREAM MUFF [*To I. K. McF.*]

ONE more day of horror had ended for Russia. At this hour once the lamps along the Neva would have been lighted, the laughter of sleigh-riders would have resounded over the snow. But now the streets were dark — deserted save by some wandering homeless people, seeking refuge in the night.

No one seemed to know exactly what had happened — or the cause —

THERE was no ruler — no order —

DARKNESS and chaos.

A GIRL, perhaps of twelve, sat huddled in a ragged shawl on the steps of a closed church.

THERE had been a time when a fire burned —

A MOTHER — a father —

BROTHERS —

THEY had gone — no one knew where. The mother was royalist.

SHE used to sew for a great lady — a Princess.

PERHAPS the jailers of a prison could tell where she was.

ONCE — in the life that was only a memory — was it real — or was the biting cold — was the hunger what had always been — her mother had taken her to the house of the great lady —

HER eyes had opened in childish wonder, as the Princess took her from room to room.

ON a great couch of palest blue, among cushions that were all lace and blue and pink — a muff.

IT had been carelessly thrown down — she had loved it. HER greatest desire had been to touch it — to feel the soft gray fur on her face.

A PIERCING wind blew from the frozen river — the muff — if it would come it would keep her warm —

SHE would put her hand in it and hold it to her heart.

THROUGH half-closed lids she saw the muff — curving and swaying in the air — like a gray bird.

IT was looking for her — there were so many freezing children in the streets — she was small for her age —

How warm — how kind of the Princess to send the muff.

MAYBE mother will soon be home from work — we can have supper —

BORIS will come from school —

BUT Boris lay dying — prisoner in the enemy's land.

WHEN a pale sun struggled to shine down on the dirty streets — on the confusion and sorrow of that Russian city — an old Priest — dying with all the rest — of sorrow for his land — found the frozen body of a little girl — with hands clasped over her heart — a faint smile on her upturned face.

## ROSE PETALS

THIRTY years had passed.

THIRTY years that I had spent in vainly trying to overcome the love and hatred which consumed me. However occupied I was with the pressing affairs of my almost over-filled life I was conscious of an undercurrent of despair — the despair that I had felt when Eve told me she no longer loved me.

WE were engaged.

WHETHER she really loved me, or whether it was only a girlish fancy I could not tell. But the day was set for our wedding and was not far off when one Sunday afternoon I went to her house for tea.

THE mahogany table in the library was covered with fallen rose petals — the roses he had sent her. Although no other detail of the room has remained in my memory, I still can see the rose petals covering the polished surface. By some inexplicable phenomenon those pink petals were fixed forever in my mind.

I LEFT that part of the country and eventually lost all trace of Eve.

THIRTY years later I had a professional engagement with a client.

THE man was ill with a cold and asked me to come to his house —

I WAS shown into a large, stately drawing-room. Great portraits were on the walls, there was massive furniture, fine oriental rugs. A fire blazed on the hearth.

THEN I perceived it — the great bowl of roses with fallen petals — scattered over the table

LIKE a knife they went through my soul — —

ROSE petals — —

EVE — the ring she had returned, which lay in some dark recess of my desk — —

THE door opened and a tall slim girl advanced —

EVE I cried — my eyes blurred till I could hardly see.

WITH a strange, somewhat strained laugh, the girl replied that she had not been named for her mother, but it was often said that she was indeed her mother's living portrait.

THEN she drew aside a heavy curtain — Before my dimmed eyes was a picture of Eve —

MY Eve —

I FLED from the house.

THE purpose of my visit claimed not an instant of my thoughts. Nor did Eve.

NOR the past.

ROSE petals only filled my mind.



I LEARNED from a friend that Eve had been drowned  
years before in the St. Lawrence River —

SHE had left her husband and baby girl for another  
love.

ROSE petals —

ROSE petals everywhere.

## IN A FIELD

A CHILD of three or four was playing in the tall grass among the nodding buttercups and daisies. I watched her as she played. She seemed a fit companion of the flowers, this sweet babe. I longed to feel the touch of her little fingers on my face.

But as I advanced to where she was playing I stopped abruptly with the sense of sudden chill. My heart even grew cold.

Was I having a vision, was it an intuition of the future — or was this a meaningless phantom!

I had been reading of late a modern philosopher whose translator had made much use of that somewhat ghostly word. Perhaps that was what had given rise to this inexplicable thing. For as I stood there watching the child there flashed across my consciousness a changing vision of her destiny.

It was terrible.

It struck me that it might be better if she could be taken now while innocent and sweet.

I caught myself back from the act of judging life and death.

I had been the momentary victim of a freakish fancy.

I gazed at the child again, and I saw a strange thing, as clearly as I see you now.

She, a young woman, was standing amidst scattered wilted flowers, with parted lips and wide horrified eyes. It seemed a land far off, some land under the burning sun.

She cried out, a cry of anguish. She was there to hide from herself and tortured by the memory of what she once had been.

I saw her again, this time on the sea, still trying to escape from herself, from the tyranny of her lost innocence.

And then I saw her in a rapid succession of scenes, again and again — gambling places, drinking, — sometimes listless and distraught — sometimes forced and eager — with wonderful, costly jewels. But they were too heavy. The price of them was weighing upon her soul.

THEN a grave, alone under leaden skies of some Northern country. No flowers now, only the moaning wind — — the cold rain.

I LIFTED the child in my arms and kissed her.

## INCALCULABLE

IT was one of those gray days so frequent in Paris in the late fall. A drizzling rain was coming down through the bare branches of the trees and a cold mist was rising from the Seine.

I FELT out of tune with the universe.

THE rain irritated me.

To cheer my drooping spirits I took refuge in the Louvre.

THERE I found no solace in the cold white statues of the lower floor. I ascended one of the broad staircases — the headless beauty of the Victoire de Samothrace only made me shudder.

I PASSED through the halls lined on either side with the masterpieces of French and Italian and Spanish Artists.

ONE in my depressed state of mind had no right to be there where faces of Madonnas smile down as one passes and deserve a freer look than mine to turn on them.

I WANDERED out again into the street.

I WALKED up the quai which winds along the river and where the quaint well-known bookshelves are built displaying to the passerby rare old books and piles of rubbish alike.

DESPITE the rain several students were eagerly looking through these stores of hidden wealth.

As the Parisian would say *ils bouquinaient*.

So I too began to pick up at random several old volumes.

AN English one caught my glance —

It was a copy of Browning — old and tattered — and pencil-marked. Turning to the fly-leaf I saw a name, written in a woman's hand —

VICTORIA O'FALLON — Paris 18—

I LOOKED up — and saw far back into now almost forgotten years of my life and there flashed into unaccountable and extraordinary vividness in my mind the remembrance of a western mining camp and of a girl, Vicky O'Fallon. She was a little red-headed beauty, who dreamed and talked of nothing but the stage, who longed to study and to travel, to release her life from the coarse and rude environment in which she lived.

AND I questioned almost passionately, could that little, discontented Irish girl be the same one whose name on an old yellowing page was intriguing my thought? How came her book here among these old volumes? Had some strange fate transplanted her to Paris in the year 18—? Had her dreams come true and was she on the stage in this great city of the world? I asked of the bookseller how this copy of Browning had come

into his hands. He did not know.

I COULD not dismiss this girl, I could not forget the book.

SOMEWHERE, somehow she had read Browning. She obsessed my mind.

SHE possessed my waking hours. I wandered from theatre to theatre, watching at the stage doors, and saw play after play, always in the hope of discovering this girl I had scarcely known. I studied hotel registers, old play-bills, and always old books. I had not thought of her for years and now I desired more than anything else in life to see once more her dancing blue eyes and hear again her laughter.

BUT it was all in vain that I scanned faces in the streets, in railway stations, in passing cabs. I could find no trace of Victoria O'Fallon.

YEARS passed.

I WAS travelling one dull English day from London to Glasgow. In the railway carriage toward night I fell into desultory talk with a sad uneasy looking man who shared the compartment with me. At some turn in the conversation he told me his name was O'Fallon. THE worn copy of Browning seemed almost to take form in my hand — and Victoria — her dream, her hair, her enchanting laugh.

FOR moments I was too dazed to speak. Then I managed to ask if by any chance he was related to a girl Victoria O'Fallon. He stared at me in silence, while a look of hatred and despair distorted his face.

FINALLY in a choked voice he breathed rather than spoke —

I AM just out of prison because of Victoria O'Fallon — she was my niece. I sent her to Paris. She was on the stage, just one night — I struck her — she fell on a chair — her back. She's dead now.

HE gazed vaguely out into the gathering darkness.

THEN he seemed to remember me.

THERE was a French Count he began, but his voice sank into silence.

I SAT as if I had been turned to stone.

## A NEAPOLITAN STREET SONG

ALONE —

A CITY full of lights, of pleasure. The sea singing to itself as it rolled quietly into the harbor. A glow of light on distant Vesuvius. Gay throngs of people passing to and fro in the summer evening. Alone. For the first time in her life.

A HEAVY heart — there was no joy.

THEY had come to Naples on their wedding journey. Her brief happiness had been taken — torn from her.

ASHES.

HE — cold — rigid — lay in the adjoining room.

TWO candles burned. A nun prayed. Monica leaned out of the window.

THROUGH her tears she saw a star shining in the night.

A STAR of sorrow.

THE sea — they had gone together on its blue waves to Capri — to Sorrento —

WAS it some terrible nightmare — would she awaken and find him near.

FROM a distant street came the sound of music — gay — lively — a Neapolitan street song.

How could there be joy. The sound was agony. An organ might have soothed.

HAD there ever been a time when gay music delighted.



O SOLE MIO sang the clear voices of the street singers. They drew nearer — and stopped under the window. MONICA's wounded inward self cried out for silence THE world was drear. There should be no joyful singing.

SHE looked down absently. A young girl stood a little apart from the singers. Monica noticed her — and their tearful eyes met.

THEN singers also could know sorrow.

SUDDENLY — her own seemed lightened.

MONICA's soul surged forward. She wanted to comfort, to help this brown-eyed girl. Perhaps her grief was harder to bear.

ONE of the men stepped toward the girl and pushed her rudely.

SING he commanded.

O PADRE MIO — she broke into sobs. The singers moved on to another street.

MONICA had read into another soul.

DEEP calling unto deep.

## IN ALGIERS

MOONLIGHT — the still waters of the ocean —

THE deck of a ship —

ROMANCE and beauty —

THE great liner sailed near the northern coast of Africa. On the deck they had become engaged — the moonlight shone on them.

DUSK and bitter cold. A young woman paced up and down in the snow, waiting the coming of a train.

It was a small town in the Interior of Russia — of the Russia torn by wars and rebellions at home. A sorrow-stricken land.

THE mystery, the romance of the night — the distant shores of Africa — seemed still upon her. She could almost feel the murmur of the water as it splashed against the boat.

AND the next day — Algiers — the quaint streets — the mosques — flowers — and white robed Arabs.

VERY quietly they had been married in the Cathedral which bears the name of a whole continent.

NOTRE DAME D'AFRIQUE.

THE sun had smiled as it shone on the city by the sea. It grew colder.

A TRAIN came into sight on the vast field of snow.

ON that train the man she loved and had married was coming to her.

THAT enchanted period in Algiers — He was returning — perhaps a wreck of his once splendid self — a cripple

WAR

It had shattered homes — brought skeletons — where once children laughed.

BROUGHT famine — once birds had eaten crumbs.

WAR —

HORROR — dismay

SHE waited

HIS eyes were aghast — eyes that had seen death — murder — horror — side by side —

THERE was no more laughter. He took Anna into his arms. Then the report was not true. He had not given his right arm.

ANNA, he whispered, My brave Anna

I HAVE been thinking of Algiers, she murmured. We planned to have sunshine — and roses — even among the snows of our country. But we faced blood — blood on the snows of our forests —

IVAN, it is bitter cold. Do not go out — into the night —

To Africa. The moon will be making golden streaks  
upon the water. A rose will be blooming in our garden — his eyes were vacant.

THEN it was not his arm he had given for Russia —  
it was —

A CRY pierced the cold air.

THE weight of a dead body resounded.

I WONDER what that was, Ivan mused —

WHICH is the shortest way to the Cathedral — —

THESE Arab streets are so steep —

## CANDLES

BEFORE a statue of Joan of Arc, in a little country church, a child knelt in prayer.

OH protect my papa — the little one prayed.

SHE lighted a candle — offered it to the Maid of France.

A YOUNG girl prayed at the feet of the Saint. She burned a candle.

FOR ANDRÉ — for his safety.

THE invaders entered the village, — heeding neither church nor ground of the dead.

THEY ripped open shallow graves to show the living they had power — even over those who had gone. They killed the priest. And the nuns, even, from the school.

THEY damaged.

DESTROYED —

THE church caught fire. The candles, burning before the Saint of Domremy, blazed into one huge flame. It shot up to the roof. And seemed to cry —

O JOAN OF ARC — come back — France needs you.

THE child

AN Angel of Heaven

THE young girl who had prayed for André — two

officers had taken her.

SHE struggled —

A SWORD —

THE flames of the burning village had revealed it.

MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ had said suicide was sin — but surely God would forgive —

SHE pierced the sword into her white flesh — blood flowed to the ground.

LITTLE FOOL muttered the maddened officer.

HE went back to the village — for more destroying.

A STONE from a burning house —

HE died with an oath.

BUT André, weeks before, had died with prayer upon his lips — a thought for his sweet betrothed.

## IGOR

ONWARD

To kill

PILLAGE

ONLY a few days before the lighted candles of a chapel. A young monk in prayer. Quietude in his soul. The brown habit — the crucifix lay forgotten. THE maddening din of battle. Its fury burned his soul.

HE had been left an orphaned child. At the monastery.

HIS name was Igor. Some whispered he was the son of a great nobleman.

NONE knew for sure.

AT first his clean soul rebelled at the thought of war, his dark eyes flashed.

THOU shalt not kill called from afar — but the cannons deafened him

THEY entered the courtyard — into the castle hall.

HAD its dwellers fled along the muddy roads and fields of Belgium

No

SOME women still —

A YOUNG one, watching for escape

ANOTHER with graying hair and soft eyes. She had stayed. Her sins perhaps would be forgiven on the Altar of Sacrifice. Burning anguish.

SHE had sinned against God. — Against her husband. Long ago.

REMORSE still clung in her heart.

IGOR drew back — but was pushed on by others, rude, boisterous, toward the wine cellars.

THOU shalt not kill faintly — but a breaking bottle dimmed the sound.

THE wine heated, wakened dormant senses.

MORE wine

WITH shouts and cries the tottering men came from the cellar — Laughed at the woman with graying hair SHE was shielding a girl whose eyes resembled Igor's. The girl who had watched to escape.

AND could not

THE uniform, the sabre —

GONE was the memory of a brown habit.

HE came nearer. Was it a woman —

HE clasped her. Her soft hair brushed his face.

OTHER soldiers came — dragged her from him. Fought over her like powerful beasts, heeding not the mother —

IGOR — protect her

IN a drunken rage he caught the girl to the open win-



dow —

I'LL kill her he screamed. You — who seem to know my name.

THE crime was spared him.

HER lifeless body slipped from his arms.

IGOR, gasped the mother, You have killed — .

I'LL kill you! — the wine had infuriated — he lifted his sabre —

STOP — you are my son

DAZED — he heard the words but understood not.

A NIGHT of drunkenness, of horror, had passed in the Belgian chateau.

THE captors had damaged — broken — destroyed.

THE sun was setting on a second day — when Igor awoke.

THE first time in his life he awakened from drink. He reached out expecting to find the rough wall of the monastery

He felt a dead body — the sharp edge of a sabre —

WHERE —

ORDERS had come

THE army

HAD there been battles —

— AND slowly memory returned —

STOP — you are my son.

WHO had said it — was it long ago — No. Only  
after the wine cellar —

HE sat up — on the floor — where drunkenness had  
overcome him.

THE horrible memory of his crime swept over him.

HIS mother —

HE seized the body and gazed at the staring eyes.  
Then this was the remorse the older monks had told  
him — had been his father's —

AND he — her son — had plunged his sabre into her  
heart

HIS own was bursting.

AND this girl. He had not killed her — she had  
died —

WAS she — his sister — only of a different father —

WE are through — burn

A HARD line played on the lips of the commander

THE flames leapt from room to room —

IGOR —

THE smoke — it was overcoming him —

HIS mother —

HE had forgotten how to pray

AN unutterable abyss.

THE horror of war

THE fire blazed upward — smoke filled the room —  
THERE'S the bell — he staggered to his feet — It is  
ringing —  
TELL Brother John to light the candles — he walked  
into the flames —  
I am coming.

## TWO HAD LIVED [*To M. D. R.*]

### I

PASSIONATELY musical — Janet Knott had been sent abroad to study.

HOMESICK and weary she wandered about in a strange city, knowing not even the language.

THE gray sky — the grayer buildings. Was there not in this city a kindly soul — one she could talk to — confide in —

IN a narrow street — suddenly the rich deep tones of an organ reached her soul —

BUILT in among great buildings a small Church. There at least she could find comfort — and the organ. WAS it a Requiem — minor chords — the keys seemed to sob under the pressure of withered hands.

JANET sobbed too. She was homesick. Lonely —

THE music stopped and the old organist came down and spoke with her. He asked why she was crying.

YOUR music is so sad, she whispered —

AH, my child, that is life — I am told to compose a Requiem —

WHAT youth, filled with the joy of living, could play these minor chords.

I TOO was young once — A student at the University. I loved life then —

I DANCED — composed only waltzes — sang love songs. But now — sorrow has played on the chords of my heart — to teach me these deeper tones — to teach me music for the Passion — for the Crucifixion. You must learn, my child, that through sorrow men accomplish great things.

WHEN they weep they send out tones into the world that men remember and cherish.

BEETHOVEN lived and suffered — and has left to the world things of immortal greatness.

BUT now — go — else I shall sadden you beyond your years — —

SLOWLY Janet walked through the darkening streets. The words of the organist filled her mind. She felt prophetically her heart must pass through fire.

WOULD she be strong enough — or would weakness — desire for joy — conquer and kill the power within.

## II

THE homesick girl of seventeen has given place to a worldly wise young woman of twenty-five.

No more longing for the land across the seas. The power within still sleeps — Paris. With its pleasure haunts, its lights, its theatres —

JANET KNOTT — the center of an admiring coterie —

she plays light music — waltzes. The joy of being alive — the whirl of a great city — subdued laughter of groups of men and women walking in the moonlight — the flowering chestnut trees — the roses — RACES of Longchamps — gay colors — a world of excitement.

LIFE —

ITS waves swept over her.

SHE had chosen between this and art — fulfillment of the Soul.

SOMETIMES shadows of her power rose — beckoned.

SHE consoled these moments with coquetry. A success — flowers

THE war broke out. Excitement still filled her. It would soon be over.

SOMETHING new —

THEN — one by one all the men she had known, flirted, danced with, left for the front. To die. That the enemy should not pass.

PARIS in danger. Death and sorrow near.

THE best in Janet Knott gradually awakened. A desire to help grew until she could contain it no longer.

ONE Sunday evening she went to Notre-Dame for Benediction — Kneeling in the shadows of the pillars she heard the organ — sad agonizing chords

SORROW has played on the chords of my heart to teach me these deeper tones —

THE memory of the little church, of the old organist — of herself, the former Janet, the homesick child.

HER gift — was it dead or only sleeping? Could she awaken it — Spin a new life on the webs of war —

THE shadow of the Janet of seventeen wept over the wasted years.

### III

THERE seemed to be no end. The war-filled years crept slowly onward, each day bringing more sorrow — more death.

JANET was torn in two.

THE human pleasure-loving side lay bleeding — dying inch by inch.

THE other, with tones of deepest beauty, rose above it, sighing that it must take such tragedy to break down its prison bars — that it might live.

IT rose — comforting Janet in many a weary hour — comforting the wounded, the dying. In a village church which had been turned into a base hospital she often played — and as they listened some pain was eased, some picture rose of happy fields, of homes. Would they see them again —

IN this tragedy of nations she had found herself.

Found the purpose of her life. Her art had come into its own — had comforted.

DEATH from a shell might take her — as it took thousands each day — but she was fulfilling the mission of her soul.

#### IV

ONE night the Church Hospital lay sleeping. Very softly Janet crept to the organ loft — softer still she played to the moonlight.

HE was rapidly improving. His wounds had not been serious. Something — very soft, faint — woke him. For a minute he could not recall his surroundings — and he rose up — but a sharp pain in his shoulder brought back the memory of the trenches, of the horror —

I MUST be dying — I hear faint music — —

THE moon shone on something white —

AN angel —

FULLY awakening to his surroundings Hugh Brandon realized that it was not death — not an angel —

HE would go and find out for himself —

JANET barely touched the keys. Softer and softer grew the tones. He came nearer — fascinated as if by a magic presence.

THEIR eyes met — in the moonlight. They knew that



no matter what happened to the rest of the world —  
no matter what happened to their own bodies — their  
souls were met for all Eternity.

It was a flash from the unconscious — one of those  
strange illuminations which occur perhaps once in a  
hundred lifetimes.

PLAY on, he whispered. Play for me — for England  
— whose son I am

At noon when they had eaten — Hugh and Janet  
slipped away. She played for him. The tones were  
richer than before. Into the sadness had been poured  
the burning heat of pure love.

## V

THEY had both known what they had thought was  
love, — among flowers, dances, the lovely but artificial  
things of life —

BUT here — among the dying — blood, privation, life  
divested of its mantles and laid bare — the true love  
sprang up between these two. Something more than  
love. A perfect understanding of each — like the  
treble and the base of a symphony —

IN the still hours of twilight Hugh and Janet would sit  
in the organ loft together, speaking the enchanted  
language only lovers know — made dearer by the

phantom of separation ever near them.

DEAREST, when the Regiment has called me back, play each day at twilight — the Miserere. If — in the trenches — I shall know your soul is calling to mine — if, beyond, my soul will drink from the depths of yours — —

SNOW was falling.

GOODBYE, dear, he whispered —

Now even the organ could not calm. She had tasted the sweet of life — and it had been torn away. For what —

SUDDENLY hate possessed her — hate for this man who would rule the world — causing whole nations to rise up against him to defend their soil — hatred for the power that had brought despair into unknown lives — BROUGHT murder into peaceful souls.

THE days followed each other in bleak sameness.

SHE moved among the wounded — a shadow self — BUT at twilight each day, Janet lived. She played the Miserere — with her soul. Then again — the moving dazed form would return to help the men lying on mattresses where once peasants had knelt in prayer —

## VI

HER music became divine. The Miserere sobbed out into the cold night air — cleansing her soul of hatred

— even Peace — a joy —

THE air was rent by whistling shells — the organ  
throbbed under her touch —

HUGH — forever —

THERE was left only a mass of charred stones — a  
blackened wall —

A CRUCIFIX still erect.

THE church had been unregarded by the enemy.

THEY has passed — leaving desolation —

DEATH had found Janet at the organ — a free soul —

SEVERAL months later in the casualty list of a London  
newspaper appeared the name of Hugh Brandon.

## THE FIFTH SYMPHONY [To R. S. L.]

“———— It is clear that the transmutation which the subject of the *Allegro* undergoes just before the close of the symphony is of the same psychological order as that of the *Fate* motive—a change from clouds to sunshine, from defeat to triumph.”

*From Ernest Newman's criticism of Tschaikowsky.*

To all outward appearances there was nothing unusual about the rehearsal. The musicians had assembled — and very softly the andante of Tschaikowsky's Fifth Symphony in E minor had begun — a dream-like wave — which little by little swelled — and dropped again — now as a hymn — a plea for unknown happiness.

Dasha Ivanovna Tortsov played. Since the first time she had heard this Slavic Symphony, one snowy night in Moscow, she had loved it. Queer yet beautiful ideas were brought by it into her mind — *The String Movement* — plentiful crops — full hearts of joy — But how could her heart be joyful? What right ever had she to be playing Russian music? She had deserted — left — talked against Russia, exaggerated the oppressions, the sufferings, had ridiculed all that others held sacred — *Dolce* — the running

waters of Russia in the summer, a clear sky — then the coming of fall with the brown leaves — a gradual decline into winter. — A storm — oh — how she had loved storms — in bygone days — then. And again still weather — the dance of gypsies at a fair — very low — a sound — a murmur —

She scarcely heard the orchestra leader's shrill whistle, his calls of Back to letter B — or letter F — or Strings softer there

It was Russia — wistful — half-fulfilled thoughts.

LONGING she had never known before took possession of her soul.

GLOOM — and yet the very depth of a Russian's heart. pouring itself out in the mystic symphony.

THEN — a lighter mood — again the green woods and water — oh for the happy song of the boatman on the Volga.

HIGHER and higher rose the trepidation. She was tense — what was it — what was breaking loose within her — Higher and higher rose the waves of the music —

SILENCE — again the strings — balm — the call of the woods — the odor of pines.

THUNDER — rolling thunder —  
— and peace —

BLUEBELLS on the grass.

To onlookers she was but a young musician — a little pale — with strange Slavic eyes — and no human being could perceive the emotions — the mental suffering — as if the cords of her heart were being tightened until they must break — her former self must die that she could reawaken — A conquered self.

The last movement was beginning. Dasha Ivanovna was hardly conscious that she played. The music swept around her — military — a call — to what? It was of marching — a faint — far away — Somewhere — out of childhood days rose the memory of her tiny hands applauding Russian soldiers as they passed — But now like a deserter she had turned away from the once loved country.

TROIKI — on glistening snow —

AND then what she always termed the Triumphant part of the symphony — where each time she played it, she knew not why — but Aïda — the triumphant entry of the King

RHADAMES —

and Cossacks riding madly — furiously

SPLENDOR —

DASHA — no it was not the leader's whistle — it was an inward voice — no one else could hear its piercing, agonizing sound — only the depth of her very being

knew — a call — Russia — the land of her fathers that she had deserted.

COSSACKS riding in the Steppes —

SHE dropped her bow and moved trance-like from the hall —

RUSSIA — —

## II

Dasha Ivanovna was once more in the land of her forefathers. Already she had walked in familiar streets, had seen familiar buildings. Alone — some-  
things within her did not need the outside world. Not lonely therefor. And a strange kindling happiness in her soul — a sense of triumph over her former Nihilistic self.

SHE saw no friends — the ones of former days — Nihilists. They were perhaps hiding in foreign lands — or were in the darker seclusion of some Siberian Prison. But there rose no longing for these friends, no wish at all for them.

No longer was she Dasha Ivanovna Tortsov the Nihilist — the free thinker —

PEACE had come to her — she wanted Peace for others —

No longer a desire to see those in power killed — only

the dark forests and running waters, the wild flowers  
in the woods.

Joy filled her — Forgotten lay the haunting fear of  
other days — the gloom cast by Prison walls — which  
had seemed ever to draw in upon her.

To live — to let live — to send up Hymns of joy.

It was on the steps of Saint Isaac's Cathedral.  
DARED she advance — dared she go in to the splendor  
of the Altars — to pray —

AND ever the Fifth Symphony like a guiding spirit  
seemed to whisper at her ear —

TRIUMPHANT over Defeat

LIGHT out of gloom —

DASHA filled her days with joy. The joy of being  
alive, of being freed from herself —

SHE saw the sky and heard the laughter of children in  
the street —

SOMEHOW — in New York — when she had belonged  
to the orchestra she had never noticed the sky. A  
few months more and the snow would come —

A WINTER in Russia —

THE early summer months passed quickly — until that  
first terrible day of August, 1914, when all the horrors  
of the world were set loose and the monsters from the  
under-world of men's mind's were stalking unashamed.



IF Dasha had put aside her Nihilistic feelings — she laid them still farther from her now.

A PURPOSE to serve her Russia lifted itself high and strong before her soul.

SHE smiled as she thought of death.

### III

SNOW and cold — suffering — starvation — in the forests the birds were dead —

LITTLE children were dead —

THE stream of fugitives increased as the days passed — Starvation — death —

TRIUMPHANT over Defeat still rang in Dasha's ears — Some day it would come —

TRIUMPH —

SHE clothed a child here —

COMFORTED a mother there —

AND still they came — over the snow and corpses — through the woods — fugitives everywhere —

DASHA worked — worked with all her heart — fed — clothed —

OUT into the snows, into the storms to look for the wanderers and bring them to a shelter —

Have mercy on my soul — she whispered — Forgive —

THE Andante far away — calling — Dasha — a reward —

DASHA IVANOVNA died on a bed of snow — On her dead face was a triumphant sweet look.

THE fugitives wept and prayed as they buried her in the woods.

WHEN summer came bluebells grew over her grave.

## THE MAD ARTIST

FAINTLY —

SPEAK, speak — Angel or demon, or both, speak to me before I throw you into the sea.

THE storm raged in all its fury around the house, and the rain beat down —

SPEAK, or I'll break you into a thousand pieces.

BUT the only answer was the smile of the Angel with the uplifted eyes and the outspread wings as if she was about to ascend to Heaven. The marble Angel that was to have been his masterpiece! His last gift to man was now his hated treasure.

NIGHT came on and with it the fury of the storm increased — and still the mad artist now implored, now threatened. The Angel smiled and looked Heavenward.

WHEN I chose a model for my masterpiece, he murmured, she was beautiful, but had not the face of that Angel. How came I to copy the image in my heart and not the living one that for months was each day here in my studio.

THE storm raged without, and within the artist groped for light, clung to the shreds of memory. His madness was increasing, his head seemed miles away. What had he been thinking of just then, had he seen a woman rise from a tomb — no, it was the Angel.

HE must get to work and finish it. But it was finished. Vaguely he remembered dismissing his model. SPEAK — with a faint cry of anguish he rushed to the statue. Speak, image of my lost Louise! But no, you are cold marble, you have no life, no warmth — STILL, it must be the girl I loved. It is her mouth, her eyes.

THE wind moaned around the house, seeming to call the name of Louise. The mad artist wept, and groped for light, for memory. Vaguely he could see, 'way back in some half-forgotten period, a nurse leaning over his cot. The noise of battle still rang in his ears — but that was all past, in his other life — now there were phantoms and the image in his heart of the lost Louise. Why had he chosen that name. That name made him think of running water. Where was reverie — Oh yes, it was the statue — well it must die. Never should men see his masterpiece that had cost him all the joy of life. For he had likened the features of the Angel after Louise.

SPEAK, demon, he implored. Take on a woman's voice.

THE storm had ceased and the sun shone brightly on the wet grass and the flowers of a day in June. One ray peeped in at the window of the studio and saw the

Angel broken by hammer and chisel on the floor. Its smiling face seemed to forgive all the madness of the night.

FROM what strange nightmare was he awakening? At the sight of his loved and hated Angel broken at his feet, his senses were slowly returning — But with what pain they came — as if his head must break.

HE could not think yet — he would later on. He had been mad — he remembered the doctor saying so — In France — shell shock.

IT had come over him as he stood by the gate of the Chateau. Then a hospital. Afterward all had been darkness, a horrible groping amid a thousand broken memories, phantoms which had shrouded him. But now it was over. He was sane — life, life! Oh what joy to live again, as one risen from the tomb — he would travel out into the world — far from his studio. THE attendant entered bringing lunch to the mad artist and found him dead, his lips pressed to the marble ones of his Angel, the image of Louise.

SHE was only one of his many phantoms.

## OLD SCORES

A NIGHT of untold beauty.

COBWEBS on the heavens.

A GRAY winter sky, brightened by the moon shining through it.

BARE branches of hundreds of trees interlacing their silvery boughs.

AND a cottage with thatched roof and square leaded panes — a setting for romance, for dreams of visionary splendor.

Is the master at home, asked a strange woman of the old man servant.

HE has not yet returned.

THEN I will wait for him.

AND despite the protests of the servant, Donna Maria entered the room. It was a story and a half in height. There was a huge fireplace, and everywhere, without arrangement, in the happy disorder of a studio, were canvases and palettes.

ANOTHER setting for romance.

BUT romance — at least for tonight — has not found its way to the studio in the woods.

THERE was perhaps some intuition, some forewarning of disaster in the mind of Robert Hale. He walked

abstractedly, untouched by the beauty of the night.  
He was deep in the inner experience of the conception  
of a new picture.

HE entered his house.

THERE is a woman, sir.

A WOMAN — — but I want to be alone.

THE old servant slept — roused for a moment by the  
closing of a door.

SHE'S gone, he muttered — and slept again.

THROUGH the splendor of the night they went —  
through its mystery, its beauty.

SHE, tense, frightened lest her power should fail on  
the verge of success —

HE in a kind of trance, with wavering mind — strange  
thoughts — nothing clear — a haze

THEY stopped under a great oak.

Do you remember your Egyptian Dancer asked  
Donna Maria for the hundredth time.

EGYPTIAN Dancer, he answered tonelessly. No, I tell  
you I killed him.

WITH a sense of victory she led him on through the  
night.

HER mind incessantly repeated to the overpowered  
mind of the artist

You killed him — — — You killed him.

THE alienist gave his testimony. The prisoner was mad. Clearly.

To every question he responded — I killed him.

AND endlessly the court room resounded with dull, monotonous voices

SOME pleading for — some against the artist.

DONNA MARIA was satisfied.

SHE would go away and Robert — well, no matter — SHE hated him.

HE had scorned her advances — her coquettish smiles, years ago in Rome when he was a student.

SHE had been unable to forget. Her pride was like an open wound.

HALE was acquitted.

BUT his mind was gone. A harmless type of insanity expressing itself in vague reiterations of a fixed idea.

DAY after day he walked in the open — Once on and on, down a slope. He slipped. And made a violent clutch to save himself. The cold waters of the river closed over him. Shock and sudden pain — the penetrating pain that comes with returning consciousness — HE began to struggle, got his stroke and swam.

DID you kill the Banker Brunton, the physician inquired gently.

THE Banker Brunton — Hale asked curiously — I



never heard of him.

A TRAIN of thought seemed starting.

BUT I remember a woman — she dropped her muff —

I stooped to pick it up

SHE must have struck me —

OR was it her eyes!

ONCE, long ago — in Rome — she tried to influence  
me that way.

I DESPISE her.

WHEN she came back I was tired. I gave in. Let's  
not talk about it.

THE physician looked at Hale with the look of a kind  
big brother.

THEN he went to the telephone.

## THE LAST

THIS is the last day for me. Tomorrow at this time many hours will have passed since the iron door of my cell was unlocked and I was taken along the corridors of the prison and across the yard to the place of execution. Already I shall know for myself what lies on the other side, I shall have ceased forever, I hope, to count the bars of my iron door, my sole occupation and the one thing which keeps me from thinking too much of the past, so bitter.

WHY did they come today. Did they think they would ease my pain, did they think it was charity to play for us, here in the prison.

AT first their music only irritated me and kept me from counting properly the iron bars. Then it enraged me, that woman with the soprano voice —

BUT I counted my iron bars —

SUDDENLY the pain, worse than any I had ever known, — remorse, sorrow, longing, — crowded into my soul. I felt as if I should die.

A MAN at the piano was playing the melody my mother most often played. My agony was beyond bearing. Repentance again swept over me, and eased me. It had been many years since I had heard that old-fashioned tune. At the first chord on the piano a flood of

memories rushed back to me.

I WAS once more a boy, in the library at home —  
lighted lamps and the curtains drawn — a fire blazed  
and crackled

My younger brothers sat on the floor near it, amusing  
themselves by fancying they saw monsters and castles  
in the depths of the flames.

My father was there

My sisters and my mother too.

OH, *misericorde!*

WHAT pain at the sight of her —

SHE is there now —

before me at the piano, and I hear that melody.

AND who is that boy sitting there,

— the hope and pride of his family. He is reading  
some book of Roman exploits and deeds of bravery —

His boyish soul is clean.

I AM sorrowful unto madness.

I MAY not live to see the hour of dawn,

THE hour of execution.

THIS grief will kill me

— that melody!

LONG since the musicians have returned to their  
homes,

I STILL hear it, note for note.

MOTHER to welcome me —

PEACE in my soul.

FORGIVE, Great Master, forgive Thy wandering sheep!

I have strayed, my Lord, far —

I REPENT — I come —

## ASHES

IT was a large house on the outskirts of the town.

IN the living room a fire blazed. Soft shaded lights — a contrast to the blizzard raging outside.

A SMALL gathering of people for informal afternoon tea.

LYDIA STUART had come in rather late. She sat comfortably on a huge divan near the fire.

A PICTURESQUE magnetic figure, dressed in purple, with beautiful warm furs.

RATHER dreamily she gazed at the fire. And mused to herself on the strangeness of life —

ASHES —

SOMETHING within her long ago had died. And the new Lydia had risen, stronger, better, for the horrible struggles against herself —

AGAINST him.

HER art had been created by the ashes of a dead love.

SHE had conquered.

ON the other side of the fireplace was standing the man she had once loved.

THE man who had once possessed her every waking hour.

SHE had fought. An inward battle — a brave struggle —

IN another town she had begged him not to see her —  
not to write.

THEN later they had met unexpectedly at a ball —  
THERE was music — many flowers — brightness —  
laughter —

HIS arms had held her close as they danced —  
A FLOOD of memories rushed across her mind.  
FOR a moment she had stood with laughing lips —  
IT had been a moment of triumph.

THEN, out of nothing — with no tie to the absorbing  
passing moment, the image of her mother rose in her  
thought.

THE triumph gave way to a new compelling mood.  
She was choosing between two loves —  
WITH cold, calculating eyes he had watched her as she  
moved across the floor —  
A GRACEFUL figure in pink.

NO one saw her as she slipped home — sad — the  
depths of her soul in burning conflict. The flowers  
she held fell unnoticed.

THE greatest struggle of her life.  
DAWN found her still fighting against the overpower-  
ing yearning.  
FOR months she struggled.

HER art increased.

A DYING part of Lydia gave power to a new-born personality — strong deep-seeing character grew up from the ashes of her former light self.

THIS afternoon, sitting on the great divan, she reflected and understood.

PERHAPS she had overcome months before.

TILL now she had not known.

AT last — only ashes — where once had been love —

HE stood there — looking at her.

SHE saw him only as a stranger —

SHE did not know him — save his name —

THE new Lydia — the artist — could find nothing in common, no union of thought.

WHAT strange lost element in her had once loved this man —

LYDIA — risen from the ashes — walked out into the snow and cold. She felt her release to a new freedom.

She could meet him again — without harm —

ANYWHERE —

AT any time —

HE was a stranger.

## NANCY TURNER

NANCY TURNER, Teacher of Dancing.

THIS inscription engraved on a brass plate had become as familiar to me as the grim row of terraces and the solemn-looking door to which it was nailed. How many times had I not passed it, as I walked from my house to my place of business. Passed it on snowy mornings and gray misty evenings, or in the summer time when birds chirruped and sang and the sun smiled down upon the earth. I had read it over and over again, as I was wont to do the names of the streets and squares, especially on my homeward walk. L—— Street — a turn to the right, the inscription on the door, B—— square — and I was already half-way home to my cheerful fireside, to my books and my violin; where Shakespeare, Milton and Beethoven would be ready at my whispered call to help me while away the hours of the evening.

BUT once as I passed this certain row of terraces, something, hitherto unknown, seemed to take possession of me. I began to see the sign in a new light and wondered why I had taken it for granted all these years, — and never once thought that indeed Nancy Turner must be a real person. It was true that I had never seen anyone enter the house, but then I passed it at



hours when people would not be likely to be taking dancing lessons. I began to wonder at my being so absent-minded that I could for years read these five words and never have them leave more than a slight impression.

AND suddenly I found myself wondering what sort of person this dancing teacher was. Surely young and talented, perhaps even beautiful. I mused about her half the way home. I even wove some strange and fanciful day dreams about her — when to my sorrow I remembered I was no longer young!

AND therefore Nancy Turner was also middle-aged. For had not the inscription bearing her name been on that door ever since I was a young boy — perhaps long before my time.

FOR days I thought about her and failed in explanations to myself, of my sudden strange fascination for an unknown name.

THE days flew by, and my curiosity to meet and talk with her only increased.

So one cold and gloomy evening I took courage and knocked at her door.

To my surprise the gruff voice of a man bade me enter. I found myself in a small room, blue with smoke and poorly furnished. An old man was cooking supper, as he hummed some weird old gypsy tune. He seemed

scarcely to notice me and displayed neither surprise nor dissatisfaction at my sudden appearance. I murmured some excuse about being in the wrong house, that I was looking for Nancy Turner in order to learn about some of the newest dance steps.

AND now you know the story of my life, of hers, and of your own, he said with a sigh. Strange that I should have asked your name. And stranger still that you came here as if led by the hand of Fate. But now that we have discovered that we are half brothers I hope you will come often to chat with me, here in this house where we were both born. I will tell you more about our beautiful mother, of her fame when she danced at the opera, of the days long ago when she and my father and I lived here so happily, of the tragedy — but no — let us forget the past. She forgave — therefore our friendship must be without shadow from the start.

## THE PAWN-SHOP KEEPER

I am an old man and life has long since lost the glamor it once held for me. The thrills of youth are no more, novelty is a forgotten word, and things that once would have made my heart leap now leave me cold. Old age indeed is in itself a punishment for the follies of youth and sad is it to await alone the coming of death without some loved face near. For one by one the friends of bygone days have dropped by the roadside and I have been left alone to follow my weary way. Happy they who die while still young and do not know the solitude of a lonely old man.

Day after day, as I sit behind my counter, or warm my old hands by the cheerful blaze of the fire, do customers come to me to buy something or perhaps to sell some loved relic in order that they may live.

ALL of them faces strange and new. They look at me as if to say Why this one dried leaf of another year left on this tree? Aye, and why am I left — Why among these young, green leaves am I the only withered one? Why were no companions left to cheer me?

But these are questions I can not answer, for I know not the ways of God.

As I sit here musing over the past, faces I have known come back to me and I love to wonder what

fate held in store for them, as advancing, the filmy mists of their futures were slowly lifted until the last veil was drawn back and the story of their lives was told.

The snow is falling and covering in white the grim rows of houses opposite my little shop, the streets are deserted save by a few hurrying pedestrians and some merry school children going down to the frozen river for an hour's skating before dusk —

AND I am here before the fire, dreaming and waiting, for yesterday brought me an experience very different from my usual monotonous life.

Was it all some phantom? It must be.

The Miriam that I have longed for all these years was not here yesterday, did not sit in this very chair. It must have been a vision, the mere fancy of an old man's mind. For how many times in sleep has not the same dream come to me as a whispered message from another world, from her grave even — and on awakening I always seemed to know that her journey through life was at an end.

But no, it was not a phantom, for here is the necklace. Then it was not a dream. Fate has really sent her to me so we can cheer each other in these, the last hours of our earthly lives.

But will she come back today as she promised? Or

will she depart again, this time for good, so that I shall see her no more until I have crossed the River of Death.

O Miriam, come to me, I need you more now than ever before. Come, I am waiting with outstretched arms.

Yes, she is coming. I see the yet distant form of the one I love. She is approaching, coming ever nearer. Miriam, what happiness we shall yet have together, in the dusk of our lives, what pleasant hours here by the fire —

Death, kindly death, come now to me. She passed by my shop and turned the corner and went toward the station. Her heart then is still cold as stone.

It was the money I paid her for the necklace that bought her ticket to another town — —

## SOMETHING PROVINCIAL

THE little house in Pemborough Square had been vacant for many years.

No lights through the closed shutters —

No smoke from the chimneys —

EVENING —

AN old woman was sitting on the doorstep muttering to herself in some strange tongue —

HER vague eyes saw neither the square nor its straight rows of trees —

ONLY something far away — a memory perhaps

SOME tragedy lay hidden in her heart.

MANY years ago this small house had been occupied by a family with several children — children that played games in the great garden behind.

A YOUNG woman had been much with the little troop of children.

THEY had all loved her who played with them as if a child herself and in happy hours had sung French songs to them.

SHE had gone away, they had heard to the Island of Madeira.

— and the children soon forgot their sweet friend.

ON the steps of this now abandoned house sat the muttering old woman.

THE sound of quick steps aroused her — she peered through the gathering gloom —

A YOUNG man was coming nearer

THE woman rose slowly to her feet and waited rigidly

IT is you — you! she whispered hoarsely —

HER words went like shots at the slight figure, now perceptible

HE stopped abruptly and shuddered like one accused of crime.

I do not know you, he managed to say. He had a flat thin voice.

YOU once lived in this house, the woman said menacingly.

HE shuddered again and stepped back

THE young man began to wonder. Could she be the sweet French woman that the village children had loved —

that he, the eldest of the little group had in his boyish awakening been romantic over —

THE gypsy sensed his admission of her charge.

SHE went on — Do you know who you are?

Do you know where you got your black hair?

HE lifted his hand unsteadily in the direction of his head.

THE old creature nodded and fixed him with her fierce

eyes.

I AM not your mother

NEITHER was the woman you called by that name.

THE young man gasped.

HIS body grew tense.

HE remembered his adored mother whose grave he visited every Sunday morning.

HE made an effort to think that this was only a gypsy — an impostor —

THE woman was speaking —

NEITHER your father nor mother ever knew that you were not their child.

THEIR little boy is dead

YOU filled his place.

HER voice sank almost to a breath.

I PLACED you in his cradle.

AN intolerable silence.

I LOVED your father

YOU never knew that he was a Portuguese nobleman.

DID you ever hear of Madeira, she asked sharply

It was there that one by one all the passions of love — hatred — revenge had torn my heart. He married and came to England — I followed — repulsed, ignored.

My only weapon against him — was to contrive — the death — of his little son.

BUT to kill a child —



SHE caught a shuddering breath.

I COULD not —

I HID it securely.

ONCE again I visited Madeira. On the steps of the Church I stabbed my enemy among the flowers in that land of beauty — a crime to darken its perfection.

So you belong to me —

You owe me much —

ALL that you can pay.

THE little sum of money he had in the Postal Savings rose into his mind — and gave him amazing steadiness

HIS voice sounded loud and full in his own ears

You lie! he shouted suddenly.

You lie! you fiend! Come into the daylight.

HE was tearing his mind free from the influence of the place, the shadows — the possessing voice of the woman.

SHE crouched back toward the door.

IT is you — you! she muttered accusingly.

No, by Heaven, it's you! he cried. I see through you now

Two men came running attracted by his loud voice

THEY lead the gypsy to a place of security

IT is you, she kept muttering to each in turn.

THE young man walked behind with straightened back and shining eyes.

## CONFLICT

IT is night — a moonlight night in the Orient —

THE earth is flooded in mystic beauty —

MIDNIGHT songbirds in the trees.

AND in the Palace of the Sultan — great marble halls  
— fountains of running water — moonlight shining in.

STRANGE, weird music of the desert played by slaves.

It is the picturesque setting of a strange tale — a tale  
of inward struggle.

THE Sultan — lying amid splendor, vivid coloring of  
the East — softened by the night's mysterious light.

AMONG flowers and heavily-scented perfumes.

HIS dancing girls have left — his bronzed face —  
framed in black hair — his dark eyes — wear a look,  
an expression of satisfied desire — Life holds nothing  
new for him — only the continuation of old  
pleasures.

AT last a heavy portière is lifted.

PERHAPS you were expecting an oriental girl of dark  
beauty — a slave —

THE girl advancing to the Sultan's couch is European  
— a Russian of noble birth.

AMONG the palms of the Orient — almost as a slave  
she sojourns in the palace of the Sultan.

ONLY one of many, a passionate love holds her there.

EVER following — pursuing, is the other self — the gentle nature, which understands neither passion nor envy. The self which still fears and loves — yet — has no courage for prayer. And the spirit of this gentle nature whispers to the dominant one —

Lift yourself up and come away — I will lead you far from the moonlight — the overpowering perfumes — into the bleak light of day — peace will find you.

No — the stillness of the night — the kisses of my Sultan content me. But soon the inner voice cried so loud — even the moonlight could not quiet it.

PULLING against the inner self — her heart must break.

THE soft music of the slaves — once it had soothed her — but now —

It was the howling wind of a northern land — of Russia — or the pealing of a bell — There had been a chapel in the dark Zamok where her childhood had been spent.

THE inner voice called Katherine — but could not yet overcome the blood which flowed in Katherine's veins — the blood of a favorite of a Czar.

SOMETIMES in the light of day the inner, other self of Katherine would overcome — would want to flee — but ever the mysticism of Oriental nights would draw out more strongly than before the tainted blood of the

unfortunate.

FINALLY the Sultan grew disdainful — There were newer girls brought from Mecca, from the desert.

THE great — the inevitable conflict with her inner self left her torn — haggard.

FOR days she hung between life and death — with no one to care, save an old colored slave.

GONE the mystic atmosphere of the Orient — the music of cymbals.

A PROVINCIAL town in France — with the ill-lighted streets — and a steady down-pour of winter rain.

IT is Christmas eve

THROUGH the window Katherine has been watching a procession of people hastening to midnight Mass at the Cathedral. Women — dressed in the picturesque garb and coif of Brittany — men and children — What peace is theirs — they know of the Christ Child — of his Mother — and no streams of lowest passion — can cover their souls.

THE Cathedral of Nantes has stood in its Gothic beauty for many centuries — has witnessed many scenes.

THAT night a soul struggled against the past.

A WOMAN — she was alive — for she walked — moved. But within — she was numb.

SHE lay almost fainting on the steps of a side Altar —  
before the crèche —

HER inner self was pleading — Katherine — live  
again!

PRESENTLY the Adeste Fidelis sounded — throbbed —  
filled the church

How beautiful — she murmured.

THE memory of the Sultan rose and fell each time at  
the sight of the candles, the acolytes in prayer. A  
vision so fierce and lustful could not live in this sacred  
place.

My child — advised the old Priest — pray — pray  
always for forgiveness — for enlightenment — for  
guidance. One who seeks these things as fervently as  
you do always finds.

THAT NIGHT HIS SORROW WAS LIFTED.

*All ye are Christ's and Christ is God.—Saint Paul*

HIGH in the mountains,  
above the cities  
where all was calm — peaceful —  
a golden moon shone down  
lighting bare branches and fallen leaves —  
lighting the dark pines —  
It shone on the lake, in a valley in the mountains,  
making golden streaks upon the waters —

CHRIST walked on earth that night and stopped near  
the shore of the lake

HE looked into its depths —  
at the sky — at the moon —  
and felt the cold night air on His Face.

A GREAT sadness had overcome Him.

GOD had reflected a corner of Heaven to men on  
Earth —

and they did not pause in pleasure or in sorrow —  
no one felt the beauty of those mountains.

HE stood alone by the lake —  
again looked into its depths —

WHAT peace — what beauty —  
DOWN below —

men grappled with death  
not beautiful death  
but hatred — lust — filled their souls.  
THEY killed — and were killed — —  
THE agonizing sorrow of Gethsemane again swept  
over Christ, as He stood by the Lake  
and wondered if men would ever be worthy of the  
gift of life —  
if they would ever make it beautiful — and not  
terrible —  
THEY were endowed with a certain freedom —  
they used it to make wars —  
to think of barbarous machines that would kill and  
torture —  
THE fiendish cries of battle were in the great valley  
below —  
CANNONS roared  
and flashed a red glare into the sky —  
TEARS filled His eyes as He thought of the unprepared  
souls which were being hurled into Eternity —  
on both sides of the battle line —  
THE broken homes —  
His heart was breaking in sorrow for the people He  
loved so well —  
MOON streaks were playing on the water —  
THE cold night air blew through the trees.

CHRIST wept —  
men surely were not worthy of life —  
of the beauty which filled the world —  
HE turned away —  
and still hearing the noise of battle —  
walked under the pines —  
HE came upon a small cabin —  
sheltered by tall trees —  
the roof was covered by fallen leaves —  
a light shone from the window.  
INSIDE — a babe slept in its cradle —  
and the mother gently rocked it —  
singing a soft lullaby —  
HER thoughts were with him, in the valley below —  
battling in the iron clutch of war —  
SCARCELY knowing for what — or for whom he  
fought —  
SHE kissed her babe  
and knelt down before its cradle —  
OH Christ —  
help me in my hour of need.  
protect him —  
protect my child —

THE sorrow of Christ had gone —  
THE mother's soul leaned to Him —



for help —

unconsciously she had helped Him —

on that night of beauty in the mountains —

when below — the world was being torn — ravaged —

THE noise of battle died away from Him —

/ HE heard only the prayer —

the soft breathing of the child and the whispering of  
the trees —

HE gathered the mother's prayer into His heart

and blessed her as He walked away

YES — men were worthy —

this hysteria of war would pass

PEACE and love would come.













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